

the heroes that we are going to commemorate on the Mall, let us not forget the Filipinos who were drafted into our Armed Forces, fought, and died for this country's freedom, and had this Congress take away their benefits in 1946.

Let the 107th Congress truly honor our veterans, restore their benefits, and pass the legislation, the Filipino Veterans Equity Act of 2001.

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY).

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

I rise in very strong support of H.R. 1696. If ever there was a memorial that should be built, this is it. Quite simply, Mr. Speaker, there is no memorial more befitting than to honor our World War II veterans and the tens of millions of people who were affected by World War II.

In fact, we in Congress agreed to honor the men and women of World War II when we passed and the President signed the act to authorize the construction of the memorial. Yet, here we are, 8 years later, with nothing to show for it. The only reason we have nothing to show is that the memorial construction has been stonewalled time and again by lawsuits and litigation by a small group of Washingtonians who do not want any additional memorials on the Mall, not even one to acknowledge what is arguably the most important event of the 20th century.

The sad fact is, Mr. Speaker, that in the meantime, over the 8 years, almost 3.4 million World War II veterans have died. With each passing day, over 1,000 more veterans die, men and women who deserve this memorial who will never see it. As this process drags on, we lose 30,000 more each month and 400,000 a year. We simply have to get construction started and completed on this memorial.

I want to add that this bill is not something we are trying to ramrod through at the last minute; quite to the contrary. There have been 22 public hearings, five approvals from the Commission on Fine Arts, and five approvals from the National Capital Planning Commission. There has been overwhelming national support, and over \$170 million has been raised or pledged by over half a million citizens, hundreds of corporations, 1,100 schools, and hundreds of veterans groups.

Mr. Speaker, all the requirements of both the National Environmental Policy Act and the Commemorative Works Act have been met. All of the approvals have been made. The site has been established and is in the proper, rightful, and fitting place. We must end the delays and get on with the construction of the memorial, which pays homage to the brave men and women who fought for our country and sacrificed their lives to keep this country and the world free.

Mr. Speaker, I am ashamed at the delay that has taken place. I strongly

urge passage of H.R. 1696 so we can finally bring the stonewalling to an end and ensure that this deserving memorial will be constructed.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of our Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Committee on Veterans Affairs, I rise in very strong support of H.R. 1696, a bill to expedite the construction of the World War II memorial on the Washington Mall between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. This artist's rendition to my left shows the dignity and grace that this memorial will provide and in true memory of those men and women who served so ably and so courageously on behalf of our country.

Mr. Speaker, as we know, the design and site for the memorial have been carefully studied. My good friend just a moment ago spoke to the number of hearings. This has been an exhaustive process. It has been approved over a period of some 6 years, a longer time than it took to win World War II.

The Allied victory in this greatest war in world history represented the triumph of the human spirit and began the march of freedom and democracy across the world that continues even today.

More than half a century has passed, Mr. Speaker, but America's World War II veterans still have no national memorial to honor them. They have been called the greatest generation; and even recently, popular movies like *Saving Private Ryan* and the *Thin Red Line* have served to remind us of their incredible bravery and sacrifices. Yet, they have no memorial, and their generation is passing away at the rate of over 1,100 people per day. How much longer can they wait?

Eight years ago, Congress passed the authorization for the World War II memorial. Today we have a site selected and a design approved through an exhaustive process that ensured careful consideration of all the relevant factors before the decisions were made.

Unfortunately, no process can ensure unanimity. A litigious few are now attempting to block both the site selection and design in the courts on legal technicalities. Oh, yes, they too support a memorial. They just cannot agree on when or where or in what form, and they have no concern about how long that process might take.

Mr. Speaker, despite a full and fair opportunity to have their opinions heard, they argue that the process was not perfect. The truth is, they do not like the result so their strategy is endless reconsideration and delay. They apparently do not care whether World

War II veterans live to see their own memorial or not. The irony is that they live in a free society, exercising rights secured by the blood of our World War II veterans and other veterans.

I frankly think this situation we find ourselves in today is unconscionable. I would like to commend my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STUMP), now chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, himself a World War II combat veteran, for leading the way on this legislation. There is nobody more able and more qualified in this Chamber to be offering this resolution than my good friend, the gentleman from Arizona. I want to associate myself with his remarks, and note that he is a former chairman, chairman emeritus, of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, like many in this Chamber and many who may be viewing these proceedings, I regret that my own father, a combat veteran who saw horrific action in New Guinea during World War II and elsewhere in the Pacific, including the Philippines, never got to see this memorial, having passed away a few years ago. He, like those 1,100 who die every day, will never see this memorial. Again, like I said a moment ago, that is unconscionable.

Mr. Speaker, if we look at the co-sponsors, this is a bipartisan effort to try to get this very important memorial moving. I think it shows that there will be and I hope should be broad support across the spectrum for this.

Let me just finally say that delay is denial. Again, 1,100 veterans die every day, 1,100 of the greatest generation. If we delay this another day, it is denial for them to see what this country has said in gratitude. It is a small token, but nevertheless it is an important token. I hope that everyone unanimously supports this important resolution. I salute the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to thank all my good friends who have spoken in favor of this resolution today. I want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), as chairman of the Committee on Veterans Affairs, and his ranking member, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS), for all their help and support; along with the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN), chairman of the Committee on the Interior, which has jurisdiction over the Mall, and his ranking member, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL), as well as the leadership for allowing us to move expeditiously on this.

In closing, let me say, let us not get into another bureaucratic wrangling and delay any further. The number of 1,100 World War II veterans has been mentioned here that are dying every day. Translate that into the time we have been on this floor. We have been on the floor approximately 1 hour. We